

CHEVY CHASE VILLAGE
BOARD OF MANAGERS
JANUARY 9, 2012 MEETING

STAFF REPORT

TO: BOARD OF MANAGERS
FROM: SHANA R. DAVIS-COOK, VILLAGE MANAGER 
DATE: 12/30/2011
SUBJECT: STATUS OF THE MANAGEMENT OF THE VILLAGE'S LISTSERV

In early 2006, I approached the previous Village Manager and suggested that we create a listserv for the distribution of information to our residents. Primarily the goal was to have a mechanism for the staff and Board to disseminate information between monthly issues of the *Crier*. Additionally, the listserv could serve as a platform for residents to communicate amongst themselves regarding vendor and contractor recommendations, sell and give away personal items, and engage in open discussions regarding matters of interest and concern. With support from the Board of Managers, the listserv was officially launched in March 2006, and currently has over 600 members.

When the listserv was launched, thought was given to the format under which it should operate. The popular "Chevy Chase [DC]" listserv is moderated for membership and for content. It was decided that this **form of moderation** was not ideal for our listserv, and no controls were placed on membership or content. If members of the Village's listserv posted inappropriate content, the member, and their message would be deleted. Unfortunately, this deletion occurs after the inappropriate content has been posted and received by members.

Last year, the Village launched a series of communications tools to facilitate timely dissemination of information from the government, augmenting the Village website and *Crier*. These tools included a blast email service, Facebook page, Twitter updates and RSS feeds. The Village no longer actively uses the listserv to distribute government-related information (i.e., meeting announcements, crime alerts, time-sensitive announcements, utility status announcements, etc.).

Additionally, over the past year we have seen an increase in "spammers" joining the group and posting **inappropriate content**. Although, these members are deleted once their message has been posted, absent membership controls, residents unfortunately receive this offensive content.

In polling **neighboring municipalities** that have listservs, the Village's is the only (interactive) community listserv actively moderated by a member of the government (i.e., staff or elected officials). All of the neighboring municipalities' listservs are moderated by volunteer residents.

Action Requested

In recognition of the Village's actions to develop reliable communications tools, in response to the need for the listserv to have heightened membership controls and therefore increased moderation activity, and in keeping with neighboring jurisdictions' positions that community listservs are a resident-specific communications tool that should be moderated and used solely by the residents of the community, I request Board support to: 1) begin soliciting one to two resident volunteers to moderate the Village listserv, and that full decision-making authority regarding the moderation (i.e., membership and/or content) of the listserv be delegated to the volunteer moderators; and 2) discontinue further use of the listserv for disseminating government-related information.